

WILSON ASKS CONGRESS TO VOTE ON ARMED SHIP WARNING ISSUE; U. S. WAITS AS U BOAT WAR STARTS

President Would Correct Report Abroad of Divi- ed Counsels Here.

**WANTS TO FIND IF
HE HAS FREE HAND**

Expects to End Impression in Berlin He Lacks Na- tion's Support

**MEMBERS STAGGERED
AT THE CHALLENGE**

**Bitter Debate Expected—
Some See Hint of Com-
ing War Crisis.**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—President Wilson started Congress to-night by calling for a count of noses on his submarine policy.

The President wrote to the acting chairman of the Rules Committee of the House urging an early vote on the resolutions now pending which warn Americans from travelling on armed merchant vessels.

divided counsels in Congress in regard to the foreign policy of the Government is being made industrious u

He expresses the belief that the report is false and adds that "so long as it is anywhere credited it cannot fail to do the greatest harm and expose the country to the most serious risks."

The President thus has thrown down every barrier against the possible discussion of foreign affairs. Congress and has in fact invited a frank and full exchange of views on the Administration's record. The challenge from the President will be the acceptance of a debate which

the opening of a debate in Congress, which is likely to be one of the most spirited and important that has taken place in years.

Wilson Is Confident.

What the outcome will be is, as of course, a matter of mere speculation, as many unexpected events may

intervene to influence the sentiment of Congress before the resolution is brought to a vote. At present, though, the Administration is confident of victory in both houses of Congress, and it seems fairly certain to unblock

observers that those who are opposing the Administration will not be able to control a majority of votes in the Senate, even if they succeed in passing a resolution through the House.

Speaker Clark and Leader Kitch

predicted last week that the House would vote 2 to 1 in favor of such legislation, but they made no count to-night. In fact, Congress leaders both for and against the Administration, seemed stunned by the sudden

In throwing down the challenge Congress President Wilson was motivated by the following considerations:

Believing that a test of strength on this issue was inevitable sooner or later, the President selected the press as the most opportune time. He apparently felt that the Administration strength in Congress on this issue

Charged with responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs, the President desired an immediate decision as to whether he was to be left with a free hand in this matter or whether

To End Talk Abroad.

To-day's move by the President, therefore, intended partly to destroy the

To say that President Wilson's letter to acting Chairman Foul of the House Rules Committee was a shock to the congress leaders is putting it mildly. It might both those who are opposing

Senator Stone, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Representative Flood, head of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

committee on Foreign Affairs, and Sen. Charles McNary, the majority leader in the upper house, have made an appointment with the President for 9 o'clock to-morrow morning, when they will try to obtain from him some more definite idea of what he expects from Congress.

Big Committee Ignored.

The President has perhaps unwittingly complicated the situation by appealing to the Rules Committee for action. That committee cannot act in the way the President desires without going overboard.

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lead of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House, before which the anti-merchantman resolutions are heard. The President's ignoring of the Foreign Affairs Committee already has set